



# PLAIN TALK for Parents

## About Your Four- to Five-Year-Old Child

Every child and parent is unique. This information highlights patterns of growth and development that apply to most children. As you watch, listen to, and play with your child, you'll discover when she or he is ready for new activities and skills. You'll find your own ways to use old and new ideas to fit your personality, your family, and your child's needs.

### GENERAL TRAITS

- Begins to play & share with other children.
- Enjoys active games.
- Can count three objects & print one or two recognizable letters.
- Likes dressing up for fun & entertaining others.
- Imaginary playmates are common.
- May boast, lie, or swear.
- Sexual exploration & curiosity are shown through play.
- Has a "why?" for every occasion.
- Knows own name and age, the number of brothers & sisters in the family & their names.
- Toileting is an established routine for most children.
- May dress & undress without much help. Can button some buttons.
- Beginning to draw faces & stick people.

### WHAT A PARENT CAN DO

- Give your child lots of opportunities to climb, crawl, run, tumble.
- Exercise as a family with walks, ball playing, trips to the playground.
- Be patient in answering questions - even the same ones repeatedly.
- Be aware of your child's need to spend time with an adult of the opposite sex.
- Praise your child's accomplishments as in "I like the way you put your toys away."

- Supervise & when possible share TV viewing.
- Provide opportunities for group play. Consider a preschool or Head Start program.
- Take your child to the library & let him/her choose books to take home.
- Set aside time for you & your child to read or talk about events of the day.
- Help your child begin to learn colors, shapes, letters, numbers.

### TOYS FOR THE 4- TO 5-YEAR-OLD

- Play dough
- Crayons & finger paints
- Books & magazines
- Colored paper, paste, blunt scissors
- Large, sturdy packing boxes
- Sand toys - spoons, scoops, pails, sifters
- Blocks in a variety of sizes
- Dolls - preferably rubber for water play
- Broom, mops, dust cloth, toy dishes, pans
- Costume box - hats, purses, shoes, scarves, lengths of cloth
- Cars, trucks, boats, trains
- Puzzles with 10-12 pieces

This material was adapted from St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center Guide to Health with their permission.

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